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*The name of the Erythraean Sea.*—By WILFRED H. SCHOFF, Secretary of the Commercial Museum, Philadelphia, Pa.

The origin of geographical names is often beyond explanation: they arise by accident, pass from mouth to mouth and from age to age, taking on new meanings and new locations, until they become mere arbitrary words, and imagination must come in to explain them. So it is with the name of the Erythraean Sea. And while no man may surely say, here arose that word, yet as Sir Thomas Browne observed, "what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond *all* conjecture".

A recent paper in the J. A. O. S. (April, 1912) by Miss Sarah F. Hoyt of Johns Hopkins, has embodied much interesting information concerning this ancient name, and explains its origin, with the approval of no less an authority than our much-respected fellow-member Professor Haupt, as derived from the microscopic algae *Trichodesmium erythraeum* occasionally found in quantity on the surface of the Red Sea, to which they impart a reddish or yellowish tinge; the decomposition of which may have caused the first Egyptian plague (Exod. 7, 17—21).

Now it is true that from Roman times onward *Mare Rubrum*, Red Sea, meant the long gulf that separates Egypt from Arabia; and it is equally true that under certain conditions of wind and climate a reddish vegetable scum forms on its almost stagnant waters, from which the name "Red" might have been suggested. But this explanation impresses me as a little too simple, too obvious. The presence of algae in sufficient quantity to color the surface over a large area would be an exceptional occurrence, not likely to lend a name to the sea. This suggestion was made by Lobo more than a

century ago; he preferring, however, to derive the name from a dye, "sufo", which he said was produced by the *suph* or bulrushes, that gave the Hebrew name to these waters. That too seems improbable because the dye, if so produced, was not of commercial importance sufficient to characterize that sea. Another suggestion connected the name with Edom, meaning red, and would have made Erythraean a mere translation of Idumean.

The name Erythraean is Greek: *Θάλασσα ἐρυθρά*, or *ἐρυθραία*. It is not derived from any Semitic or Egyptian name, and it was not applied to the body of water which we know as the Red Sea. The Greeks knew that as the "Arabian Gulf", the natural Egyptian name. Consequently any explanation derived from the peoples of that region must be arbitrary and without foundation.

The early Greek literature conceived the habitable earth as a circular plane surrounded by the Ocean Stream. Little by little as the mental horizon of the Greeks was pushed outward it was seen that this scheme must be modified, and that the surrounding ocean here and there penetrated into the solid earth. Such irregularities were noted in the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea, supposed to communicate with the ocean stream; such also was our Red Sea, known to the Greeks as the Arabian Gulf. Of the navigation of the outer ocean the early Greeks knew very little. Vague stories came to them of Phœnician and Carthaginian trading beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and of a circumnavigation of Africa by Phœnician ships in the service of Egypt. Of the eastern ocean they had no knowledge until they were brought into contact with the great empire of the Persians, which had overthrown that of the Chaldaeans, and under both of which there had been sea-trading since time immemorial between the Euphrates and Western India. That was the sea-route which they meant by the word Erythraean, which came to them from Persia. It is through that connection that its origin and meaning must be sought.

*Ἐρυθρός* in Greek means red, *ἐρυθραίνω* to dye red, and *ἐρυθθαίνω* to blush; there is a Greek personal name *Ἐρυθρᾶς* that has some connection with these meanings, and a Greek city *Ἐρυθραί* in Boeotia, whose oracles made the name familiar on Greek lips, as one readily to be extended to some new-

found region. Possibly all these facts may have had their share in the application of Erythraean to the waters between Babylonia and India, and later by a reasonable extension to the whole Indian Ocean and all the gulfs that communicate with it.

Hecataeus, the first of the Greek geographers, knows nothing of an Erythraean Sea. The first writers that give us the name are Herodotus, as quoted below, and Pindar (*P.* 4, 448), the latter in one passage only. From Herodotus, however, we have sufficient information clearly to explain the meaning of the name as current in his time, which referred to Persian and not Egyptian waters. He speaks, (1, 180) of the Euphrates flowing from Armenia through Babylon and falling into the Erythraean Sea. Again (4, 37) he says:

"The Persian settlements extend to the southern sea, called the Erythraean; above them to the north are the Medes; above the Medes, the Saspire; and above the Saspire, the Colchians who reach to the northern sea, into which the river Phasis discharges itself. These four nations occupy the space from sea to sea . . .

"Another tract beginning at Persia, reaches to the Erythraean Sea; it comprises Persia, and after that Assyria, and after Assyria, Arabia; it terminates (terminating only by custom) at the Arabian Gulf, into which Darius carried a canal from the Nile . . .

"Beyond the Persians, Medes, Saspire, and Colchians, toward the east and rising sun, extends the Erythraean Sea, and on the north the Caspian Sea and the river Araxes, which flows toward the rising sun. Asia is inhabited as far as India; but beyond this it is all desert toward the east, nor is any one able to describe what it is. Such and so great is Asia."<sup>1</sup>

The first Greek record of navigation in the Erythraean Sea is likewise found in Herodotus (4, 4):

"A great part of Asia was explored under the direction of Darius. He being desirous to know in what part the Indus, which is the second river that produces crocodiles, discharges itself into the sea, sent in ships both others on whom he could

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations are from Cary's translation.

rely to make a true report, and also Scylax of Caryanda. They accordingly, setting out from the city of Caspapyrus and the country of Pactyice<sup>1</sup> sailed down the river toward the east and sunrise to the sea; then sailing on the sea westward they arrived in the thirtieth month (τρηκοστῷ μηνί) at that place where the king of Egypt despatched the Phoenicians, whom I before mentioned, to sail around Libya. After these persons had sailed round, Darius subdued the Indians, and frequented this sea. Thus the other parts of Asia, except toward the rising sun, are found to exhibit things similar to Libya".

The truth of this story in Herodotus has been seriously questioned in voluminous arguments which are now so much waste paper, as we have written records of Hindu trade with Babylon, which they called Baveru,<sup>2</sup> more than a century before that time, and we have the discovery of teak logs in buildings at the ancient Ur reconstructed by Nabonidus. These logs came from western India, from the Cambay region; and in the *Periplus* of the first century, we have a written record of the same trade still existing.

That the Persian Gulf was almost an inland lake was not fully understood by Herodotus, and it is clear that by the name Erythraean he meant the surrounding ocean to the south and east of the Eurasian continent. The eastern extension of that continent was quite unknown to him, as he supposed Europe to be larger than Asia, and imagined western India to be the eastern boundary of Asia. That Erythraean

<sup>1</sup> Caspapyrus, Sanscrit Kasyapapura. This was the Indus valley in the neighborhood of the confluence of the Kabul river, more or less the Peshāwar district. Hecataeus mentions this place as a city of the Gandharians. Pactyice, or the Pactyan land, was the upper course of the Kabul valley; or more generally the territory in which Pukhtu was spoken—southeastern Afghanistan. See Lassen, 1, 142—2, 631. Vincent Smith, *Early History*, 2nd edition p. 35; Schoff, *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* pp. 42, 189.

<sup>2</sup> See Rhys Davids *Buddhist India* p. 104. *Jātakas* 3, 126—189. As to the reconstruction of Ur by Nabonidus see Maspero, *The Passing of the Empires* pp. 626—7. Inscriptions of Nabonidus are quoted in Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* 157—171. As to the teak trade from India see Schoff, *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* pp. 36, 152, 201. See also Mookerji, *History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity*, p. 74.

to his mind meant the southern and eastern surrounding ocean is clearly shown in 1, 203:

"The Caspian is a sea by itself, having no communication with any other sea; for the whole of that which the Grecians navigate, and that beyond the Pillars, called the Atlantic, and the Erythraean Sea are all one."

And that the name Erythraean in the mind of Herodotus did not specifically refer to the body of water we now call Red Sea is clearly shown by the following (2, 10):

"There is also in the Arabian territory, not far from Egypt, branching from the Erythraean Sea, a bay of the sea, of the length and width I shall here describe. The length of the voyage, beginning from the innermost part of this bay to the broad sea, occupied forty days for a vessel with oars; and the width where the bay is widest, half a day's passage, and in it an ebb and flow takes place daily; and I am of opinion that Egypt was formerly a similar bay, this stretching from the Northern Sea toward Ethiopia; and the Arabian Bay, which I am describing, from the south toward Syria; and that they almost perforated their recesses so as to meet each other, overlapping to some small extent. Now, if the Nile were to turn its stream into the Arabian Gulf, what would hinder it from being filled with soil by the river within twenty thousand years? For my part I think it would be filled within ten thousand."

The same topography is followed by Strabo (16, 3. 1) where he says, describing Arabia, "The northern side of this tract is formed by the desert, the eastern by the Persian Gulf, the western by the Arabian Gulf, and the southern by the Great Sea lying outside of both gulfs, the whole of which is called the Erythraean Sea".

This is confirmed by Arrian in his *Indika* (19), E. J. Chinock's translation (Bohn Ed.), in the following passage:

"This narrative is a description of the voyage which Nearchus made with the fleet starting from the outlet to the Indus through the Great Sea as far as the Persian Gulf, which some call the Erythraean Sea." Again (40):

"The land of Persia has been divided into three parts in regard to climate. The part of it situated near the Erythraean Sea is sandy and barren, on account of the heat; the part from this toward the north enjoys a more temperate climate, the country is grassy and the meadows moist...

Still further to the north the country is wintry and snowy." Again (43):

"The country on the right of the Erythraean Sea beyond Babylonia is Arabia, most of it; part of this extends as far as the sea of Phoenicia and Palestine-Syria; but toward the west in the direction of the inner sea, the Egyptians border on Arabia. . . .

"Alexander despatched men from Babylon to sail as far as possible on the right of the Erythraean Sea, and to discover the places there."

The first attempt to assemble and discriminate between the various explanations of the name Erythraean (*Ἐρυθρὰ* or *Ἐρυθραία*) is found in the book of Agatharchides on the Erythraean Sea, which may be dated about 120 B. C. Agatharchides was certainly in a position to know his subject; occupying a prominent official position in Egypt under the Ptolemies, he was fully acquainted with the southern incense trade and gives us the first detailed account of the power and wealth of the kingdoms of South Arabia, and of the way in which that rich trade was monopolized. His criticisms are therefore worthy of consideration. He says, first, that the name is derived by some from the color of the sea, arising from reflection of the sun which is vertical, or from the mountains which are red from being scorched with intense heat. This suggestion he dismisses as quite inadequate. The tremendous heat on the Red Sea and in the Persian Gulf is noted by many writers. Arrian in his account of the voyage of Alexander's captain Nearchus speaks of the possibility of sailing from Babylon around Arabia to Egypt, but says, quite incorrectly, "No man has ever made this voyage on account of the heat and desolateness of the country. During the day one cannot keep out under the open sky because of the heat."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Centuries later, the Persian traveler 'Abd-ar-Razzāk writes of the climate of Oman (Hakluyt Society's publications, vol. 22 p. 9):

"Although it was at that time spring, in the season in which the nights and days are of equal length, the heat of the sun was so intense that it burned the ruby in the wine and the marrow in the bones, the sword in its scabbard melted like wax, and the gems which adorned the handle of the khandjar were reduced to coal.

Thus while Agatharchides admits that we might explain the name Erythraean, red, from the fact that the sea is, as it were, red hot, we should still be away from the truth.

Another explanation, which Strabo (6, 4. 20) quotes from Ctesias of Cnidus through Artemidorus, ascribes the name to a spring which discharges into the sea a red and ochrous water. This is certainly an inadequate explanation, and, as Agatharchides observes, a false one, "for the sea is not red". Yet this was the explanation adopted by Strabo and thence by the Roman geographers, and more recently by Professor Haupt. But Agatharchides is quite right in saying that mere color of the water is no guide to the name. The mediaeval Chinese writer Chau-Ju-Kua calls this same body of water the "Green Sea".<sup>1</sup>

Agatharchides then offers his final explanation (§ 5) in a story which he quotes from a Persian named Boxus whom he had met in Athens, and this story, the full importance of which has not been understood, I venture to translate entire.

„The Persian account is after this manner. There was a man famous for his valor and wealth, by name Erythras, a Persian by birth, son of Myozaeus. His home was by the sea, facing towards islands which are not now desert, but were so at the time of the empire of the Medes, where Erythras lived. In the winter time he used to go to Pasargadae,

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„Soon as the sun shone forth from the height of heaven,  
The heart of stone grew hot beneath its orb:  
The horizon was so much scorched up by its rays,  
That the heart of stone became soft like wax:  
The bodies of the fishes, at the bottom of the fish-ponds,  
Burned like the silk which is exposed to the fire;  
Both the water and the air gave out so burning a heat,  
That the fish went away to seek refuge in the fire;  
In the plains the chase became a matter of perfect ease,  
For the desert was filled with roasted gazelles.

„The extreme heat of the atmosphere gave one the idea of the fire of hell.”

<sup>1</sup> Chau-Ju-Kua: his work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the 12th and 13th centuries, entitled *Chu-fan-chi*: Translated and annotated by Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill: St. Petersburg, 1911.

(See map at end: also page 12. The name Green Sea is of Arabic origin, carried into Chinese records. Kia Tan speaks of Malabar as the "eastern shore of the Green Sea".)

making the journey at his own cost; and he indulged in these changes of scene now for profit and now for some pleasure of his own life. On a time the lions charged into a large flock of his mares and some were slain; while the rest, unharmed and terror-stricken at what they had seen, fled to the sea. A strong wind was blowing from the land, and as they plunged into the waves in their terror, they were carried beyond their footing; and their fear continuing, they swam through the sea and came out on the shore of the island opposite. With them went one of the herdsmen, a youth of marked bravery, who thus reached the shore by clinging to the shoulders of a mare. Now Erythras looked for his mares, and not seeing them, first put together a raft of small size, but secure in the strength of its building; and happening on a favourable wind, he pushed off into the strait, across which he was swiftly carried by the waves, and so found his mares and found their keeper also. And then, being pleased with the island, he built a stronghold at a place well chosen by the shore, and brought thither from the mainland opposite such as were dissatisfied with their life there, and subsequently settled all the other uninhabited islands with a numerous population; and such was the glory ascribed to him by the popular voice because of these his deeds, that even down to our own time they have called that sea, infinite in extent, Erythraean. And so for the reason here set forth, it is to be well distinguished (for to say *Ἐρυθρα Θάλαττα*, Sea of Erythras, is a very different thing from *Θάλαττα ἑρυθρὰ*, Red Sea); for the one commemorates the most illustrious man of that sea, while the other refers to the color of the water. Now the one explanation of the name, as due to the color, is false (for the sea is not red), but the other, ascribing it to the man who ruled there, is the true one, as the Persian story testifies.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The origin of these names, Erythras and Myozaeus, is a matter of conjecture. One suspects a loan to the Persians from some earlier race. Myozaeus dimly suggests Māhya, the moon (perhaps Māhāzād, “known to the Moon” (cf. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*); while Erythras might represent Arezwā or Arezrāspa, two high priests from the north (cf. *Dinkart* V. and IX); or have we here Aresh, the demon of envy, whom Zarathushtra called “most deceitful of demons” (*Dinkart* IX),—some divinity of an earlier race adopted by the Persians as their arch-devil?

Arrian likewise refers to this story (*Indika* 37) in his mention of the island Oaracta-(Kish).<sup>1</sup> "In this island they said that the tomb of the first king of this country was shown. They said that his name was Erythras, from whom this sea is called Erythraean." Of Kish he also says (*Indika* 37): "It produces plenty of vines, palm trees and corn, and is full 800 stadia in length. In this island the sepulchre of the first monarch thereof is said still to remain, and his name was Erythras, and from him the sea was called the Erythraean Sea."

Strabo, in the passage already quoted (16, 3, 1) in describing Arabia bounds it on the east by the Persian Gulf, on the west by the Arabian Gulf, and on the south "by the great sea lying outside both the gulfs, the whole of which is called the Erythraean Sea." Strabo likewise, though in one passage (Hamilton & Falconer's translation, Bohn Ed.) he adopts the color theory of the origin of the name, admits the story of Erythras as follows (16, 3. 1.):

"Nearchus and Orthagoras relate that an island Ogyris lies to the south, in the open sea, at the distance of 2000 stadia from Carmania. In this island is shown the sepulchre of Erythras, a large mound planted with wild palms. He was king of the country, and the sea received its name from him. It is said that Mithropastes, the son of Arsites, satrap of Phrygia, pointed out these things to them. Mithropastes was banished by Darius, and resides in the island; he joined himself to those who had come down to the Persian Gulf and hoped through their means to have an opportunity of returning to his own country . . . .

"Nearchus says that they were met by Mithropastes, in company with Mazenes, who was governor of one of the islands, called Oaracta, in the Persian Gulf; that Mithropastes after his retreat from Ogyris, took refuge there, and was hospitably received; and that he had an interview with Mazenes, for the purpose of being recommended to the Macedonians, in the fleet of which Mazenes was the guide."

In this Persian story of Erythras may be found remnants of very early legend. We are introduced to a settlement in southern Persia on the lowlands bordering the gulf. Their

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<sup>1</sup> Vorochtha-Vroct-Kismis-Kish.

chief went regularly to the Persian capital "at his own expense," presumably to offer tribute. During his absence, shall we say because the tribute was insufficient, a lion attacked and scattered his mares, driving them across to uninhabited islands accessible from the shore. The highland of Persia is still the "land of the lion and the sun". The lion is particularly a symbol of Persia; and have we not here the kernel of a story of attack by Persian forces upon a coast people of another race who were forced across to the islands of Ormus and Kish, and thence probably to the coast of Oman and southern Arabia? The opposition of the lion to the mare is the aggression of powerful Persia against helpless Arabia. The story is placed by Agatharchides under the empire of the Medes. I believe, however, that it may be given a much earlier origin, and that we may possibly have here an echo of the ancient conflict between the highland and the plain which characterizes the history of early Chaldaea.

The tomb of king Erythras, of which Arrian speaks, which was evidently a type of structure mentioned by modern travelers as still found in that region, seems to apply to a pre-Semitic race settled in the Persian Gulf and carrying on sea trade there. The remnants of that commercial system which Goetz, (*Verkehrswege im Dienste des Welthandels* p. 38), has aptly entitled "Turanian-Hamitic", may be traced through Makran and Baluchistan to Dravidian India on the one hand, and through Oman and southern Arabia, the ancient Ḥaṭash to modern Abyssinia on the other. There is some significance in the mediaeval Arabic name for this sea (e. g. Mas'ūdi), "Sea of Ḥabash". Had we the evidence, I believe we might find the name Erythraean to have sprung originally from some name of that race, possibly even a semi-totemic color handed down through the legends of the adjacent highlands, first Elamitic and later Persian.

Other meanings suggest themselves from the Persian connection. Firstly, of course Erythraean means oriental, eastern, pure and simple. As Herodotus observes, it is the sea "that looks toward the rising sun", from Persia; the eastern and southern segments of the encircling ocean as distinguished from the western and northern, to which he gives the name Atlantic; and so, poetically, we may call it the sea of the blushing morn—the sea of the rising sun. Especially in this

combination of the sun, and the color red or golden red, in accord with Persian beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

How beautifully Tennyson in the hymn at the end of his "Akbar's Dream" has given expression to this ancient Persian ritual:

"Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see  
thee rise,  
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human hearts  
and eyes.

Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down be-  
fore thee,  
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine ever-chang-  
ing skies.

"Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from clime to  
clime,  
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their wood-  
land rhyme.

Warble bird, and open flower, and men, below the dome  
of azure,  
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that measures  
Time!"

While there are earlier connotations in the name of that ancient so-called king Erythras, the sun and the color red carry us to the very core of the Zarathushtrian faith.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With the earlier practices of sun-worship, Semitic or pre-Semitic, we need not concern ourselves. There are relics of this worship still on the island of Haftalu, the Astola of the Greeks, off the shore of Makran, that magic island of the Arab voyagers which magnetically attracted nearby ships to their destruction so that the use of iron in shipbuilding was made impossible.

<sup>2</sup> Darmesteter in his work on the Zend Avesta (vol. 3. p. lxxvi. note); and while he finally accepts Burnouf's interpretations of "man with gold colored (tawny, or red) camels", the color still remains.

Zarathushtra was said to have been born of the mingling of his guardian spirit with a ray of heavenly glory during a sacrifice, and the sun worship was centered in Mithra, one of the great spirits of the Mazdean faith—"who first of the celestial Yazatas soared above Mount Hara before the immortal sun with his swift steeds; who first in golden splendor passes over the beautiful mountains and casts his glance benign on the dwellings of the Aryans".

The great Persian king Cyrus was by name "the sun of the morning". King Erythras himself, "the king of the rosy morn", we might also connect with Cyrus, save that his tomb was then too recent for its location to have been moved by legend from the mountains to the island of Kish.

Yet I believe that the story of Erythras ante-dates the Persian faith or the very existence of Persians on that coast.

So much, then, for Erythraean as the Sea of the East, the rising sun and the blushing morn.

Another meaning I think the name includes, derived from the purple-fisheries which were among its earliest commercial assets. *Ἐρυθραίνω* is to dye red, and the treasured dye of that hue running from bright red to dark purple, according to method of treatment, was a product of the shell-fish *murex*; later cultivated on the Phoenician coast of Syria, but in earlier ages probably in the shallow, almost tideless, waters of the Persian Gulf. We have the word in Homer, not then as referring to a commercial dye, but as a shade varying from light red to dark purple and including the idea of brightness—glittering—gleaming. It is this impression of "gleaming darkly" that is connected with the very root of the word *πορφύρεος*. Aristotle (*Color.* 2, 4; also *Probl.* 38, 2) describes the color as the "reflected gleam on the shadow side of a wave", and it was that meaning which was carried to the shell-fish dye when first brought to Mediterranean lands by the people we call Phoenicians, whose legend connected them in earlier times with the Persian Gulf. Pliny speaks of that double tint as the most treasured of the shades of the purple (9, 60—63, Bohn translation):

"To produce the Tyrian hue the wool is soaked in the juice of the *pelagiae* while the mixture is in an uncooked and raw state; after which its tint is changed by being dipped in the juice of the *buccinum*. It is considered of the best quality when it has the color of clotted blood and is of a blackish hue to the sight, but of a shining appearance when held up

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Hara is Haraberezaiti, or Elburz, "over which the sun rises, around which many a star revolves, where there is neither light nor darkness, no wind of cold or heat, no sickness leading to a thousand kinds of death, nor infection caused by the Daevas, and whose summit is never reached by the clouds" (Yasht 12, 23. Darmesteter iii, 496).

to the light; hence it is that we find Homer speaking of purple blood" (Iliad E 83, P. 360). And he goes on to quote from Cornelius Nepos: "Violet purple was in favor, a pound of which used to sell at 100 denarii; not long after the Tarentine red was all the fashion. This last was succeeded by the Tyrian *dibapha* (double dyed) which could not be bought for even 1000 denarii per pound."

The eastern origin of the Phoenicians is stated by Herodotus (7, 89): "The Phoenicians, as they themselves say, anciently dwelt on the *Erythraean Sea*; and having crossed over from thence, they settled on the sea coast of Syria"; like Abraham the patriarch, they came from the land of Ur of the Chaldees, the center of sun-worship and of eastern trade.

Finally we may quote from Strabo (1, 2. 35) who refers to the belief that the Sidonians were "a colony from the people whom they describe as located on the shores of the (Indian) Ocean, and who, they say, were called Phoenician from the color of the Erythraean Sea."

Was it the natural color of the sea that gave it the name, or was it the legend and faith of the people living around its shores and the artificial color of the dye which they drew from its waters? I believe we may attach to Erythraean that meaning also, "sea of the dark red dye people", and that in that sense it may be synonymous with purple, *πορφύρα*, and Phoenician, *φωινίς*; the sea on which the Phoenician race, who first brought purple to the Mediterranean lands, had before that time established their cities and industries and maritime commerce.

Whether there was anything more than an accidental connection with the name of the Greek city Erythrae in Boeotia we cannot tell. The likelihood is not great, but it might possibly be urged by some that Dorian Greeks were settled in many parts of that land before the Persian invasions of Greece. Alexander found Greek colonies at the gates of India that claimed a descent prior to the Greek companies exiled to the east by Darius, and at the Christian Era we find an archaic Dorian character appearing in the Greek lettering on the coins of Mesene at the head of the Persian Gulf, and on those of the Kushan kings. While certainly not a cause for the name, this might have given it familiarity in Greek ears.

We need not too sharply distinguish between these various meanings, and possibly the general acceptance of the name was due to the fact of its applicability from so many points of view. Purple Sea would hardly have suggested the sun; Phoenician Sea would have been a confusing name, while Erythraean Sea, as practically a synonymous word embracing all these meanings, made an ideally acceptable name.

In conclusion we may say that looking out of Greece through Persia to the ancient East, we may gather from the name Erythraean several meanings, all of them reasonable. "Sea of the East, the Orient, or the rising sun"; "Sea where the sun was worshipped"; "Sea whence came the people who brought the purple or Erythraean dye", and finally, "Sea of King Erythras" typifying the ancient pre-Semitic Akkadian-Dravidian trade. Certainly with these vistas of the past opened through that name, we cannot rest satisfied with an interpretation that would limit it to a temporary accumulation of vegetable matter localized at a point to which the name was not originally applied.